

terest of the Botanical Club, an exceedingly valuable organization, and one whose informal meetings cannot be duplicated by a Botanical Section of the Association. Even if the division into botanical and zoological sections be made, it will always be desirable to have certain papers of general biological interest read in joint session, a thing commonly provided for in other sections.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Saccardo's *Sylloge Fungorum*.

The enumeration and description of all known fungi, a work of enormous magnitude, was begun a decade or more ago by Prof. P. A. Saccardo, of Padua, Italy. The first volume appeared in 1882, and the eighth and last of the regular enumeration two years ago. The eight, thick, royal octavo volumes contained the description of 31,927 species.

It was to be expected that some species would be overlooked, and that new ones would be constantly added, so that the work is no sooner finished than it needs a supplement. The first number of such a supplement is already issued, and botanists will feel under a special debt of gratitude to the author for the promptness with which it has been prepared.

The *Supplementum Universale* is to consist of two volumes, the first of which bears date of September, 1891, and the second is promised for 1892. The present volume¹ is as thick as the thickest of those which have preceded, and contains descriptions of 4463 species, distributed among six large groups, as follows: Hymenomycetæ 1083, Gasteromycetæ 72, Hypodermeæ (Ustilagineæ and Uredineæ) 249, Phycomycetæ 139, Pyrenomycetæ 2903, and Laboulbeniaceæ 17.

The volumes containing the Pyrenomycetæ were issued in 1882-3, which partly accounts for the great preponderance of species in that group. The Laboulbeniaceæ appeared in the final volume, 1889, with only 15 species, and the 17 additions of the supplement were all derived from the two publications of Dr. Roland Thaxter, and are all American. Thus the largest and earliest published group shows an increase of 47 per cent., and the smallest and latest published group shows an increase of 113 per cent. Even if we take into view the rusts

¹ SACCARDO, P. A.—*Sylloge fungorum omnium hucusque cognitorum*: Vol. IX, *Supplementum universale*, Pars I. pp. 1141. Roy. 8vo. Padova. 1891.—fr. 57.

and smuts, which are among the best worked of the fungi, and which show 8 per cent. increase since the volume on that group came out three years ago, the rate at which new species are published is almost appalling, and makes a work like the present well-nigh indispensable.

A book for children.

The books which are adapted to stimulate the interest of children in the plant-world are few enough, when all are enumerated, and those that are even tolerable can be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is with much pleasure therefore that we welcome another,¹ for it belongs distinctly to the better class. Mrs. Bergen has very happily named her little book "Glimpses at the Plant World," and they are surely enticing glimpses which ought to engender a desire for fuller knowledge. In thirteen chapters of five or six pages each the author describes engagingly the different types of plants, yeast, moulds, toadstools, lichens, fresh-water and marine algæ, mosses, ferns and flowering plants. The remaining chapters, about as many more, deal with the fertilization of flowers and the methods of seed distribution, topics which are in their nature attractive and are here made so for children.

Mrs. Bergen's style in this book is easy, in places colloquial, and what is of much greater importance the statements which she makes are not only well put but correct. We recall none that is absolutely incorrect and very few that one would even wish changed on account of possible misconception. The publishers have given the little book a tasteful dress, but some of the illustrations are open to criticism; such as that of diatoms (?) on page 38, which is only a three inch black circle, with a few scratches in it. The text deserves the best and most artistic work.

A collector's guide.

A new guide for collectors of phanerogams appears from the hand of Professor Penhallow.² It contains concise directions for the collection and drying and mounting of phanerogams chiefly, though enough reference is made to the mosses to urge objections against the use of half-size sheets for such smaller plants, objections which appear weighty to the author, we venture to say, only because he never tried

¹ BERGEN, FANNIE D.—Glimpses at the plant-world. 16mo. pp. vi. 156. Boston: Lee & Shepard. 1892. [*sic.*]

² PENHALLOW, D. P.—The botanical collector's guide: a manual for students and collectors; containing directions for the collection and preservation of plants and the formation of a herbarium. 16mo. pp. 125. figs 8. Montreal: E. M. Renouf. 1891.—75 cents.

the small paper. We note also that standard paper is given as 11×17 inches, which does not quite agree with that most used on this side of the boundary. An appendix shows samples of labels, of mounting and drying paper, genus covers and pockets "for seeds and mosses." (There is a much better form for mosses, by the way.) On the whole the directions are excellent, clear and simple, and in the neat form given them by the publisher, come just at the right time to help along the *renaissance* in collecting to be wrought by the Botanical Club of Canada.

OPEN LETTERS.

Nomenclature from the practical standpoint.

There is one point in this matter of botanical nomenclature on which, with all due respect, very many writers on the subject seem to have gone astray. It has been assumed that there is no reason why botanical nomenclature should not follow the same rules as zoological nomenclature, and hence the priority of names can be as rigidly maintained in the former as in the latter system. This may be very well in theory, but in practice the cases are very different. In zoology generally the scientific names are not in common use outside of scientific circles, while in botany they are. This difference is owing not only to the greater popularity of the latter science, but to the great development of horticulture among the people. In consequence the Latin generic and specific names of plants are used almost as often as some English equivalent, and in many cases to the entire exclusion of so called "common names." This being the case the attempt of certain botanists to change well known names of plants for no other reason save to carry out their own pet theory of nomenclature is almost as hopeless from a practical point of view as an attempt to revise and change the common names of plants in accordance with the individual taste of a certain school of botanists. The nomenclature of a science is not necessarily so much a part of the science that only scientific men can pass on it. Accepted usage has its rights, and generally maintains them whether in accord with theory or not.

A more analogous case, it seems to me, is that of geographical nomenclature. Here also popular usage is a factor, and at once the folly of trying to lay down strict, inviolable rules becomes apparent. Time and time again have the good old historical names been supplanted by names of modern origin, and it would be well nigh useless to make even an attempt to restore them unless the attempt is to be made by authority of the government, not of the individual. Just here appears one of the weakest points of the "strict priority rule" of botanical nomenclature—that it is the creation of the individual, not only unsupported by such governmental botanical authority as we possess, but directly opposed to it in many important particulars. In other words, individual opinion tries to oppose such botanical consensus as we now have in order to carry out its own private theory.